

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 184

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, THURSDAY,
September 6, 1962, 12:38 p.m.

MR. REAP: We have two press releases for you, one, which Jim has just handed out, No. 536, President Kennedy hopes to meet with Central American and Panamanian chiefs of state in 1963. I think the press release is self-explanatory.

Q Yes.

A There is also Press Release No. 538, for release at 6:30 this evening, the address by Walter Rostow, at the Shoreham Hotel here.

That is all that I have.

Q Joe, do you have any comment on the large assortment of charges the Russians made against the United States in this last one?

A You are referring to their note of yesterday?

Q Yes.

A Yes. The Soviet note of September 5 purports to be a reply to the Western Allied notes of August 24, and to the United States note of August 27. These notes emphasized the responsibility--

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seen from London, that he has taken some barbiturates, and--I forget the expression they use--that he is not in a condition to travel.

Q There is no official comment?

A No.

Q What about the story that U-2's are mapping China? Can you say anything about that?

A I have seen the story and I have no comment at all.

Q The Cuban Ambassador at Mexico charged yesterday that there are five training camps scattered throughout Central America for training troops to invade Cuba. Do you have anything to add to that?

A I am afraid you have to ask the Central American countries on that.

Q Has the formal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Americas been set up for New York?

A I have had several questions about that, stemming from the meeting yesterday of the Secretary and the Latin Americans who came in. There have been some confusing stories about it. .

The facts are that when the Secretary talked to the Ambassadors he mentioned that the suggestion had been made that with so many Latin American Foreign Ministers

going to New York for the UN General Assembly, that it might be a good occasion for them to get together informally for an exchange of views on subjects of mutual interest.

Lest you read anything into that language here, it means our Foreign Minister too. It says the "Latin Americans" get together, but it would include Mr. Rusk.

Q The senior ambassador.

A That is, the Secretary indicated that such a meeting, if held, would be strictly informal, with no agenda or intention to reach decisions or take any action whatever.

The Secretary asked the Ambassadors whether they would ask their Foreign Ministers if they would be interested in having such a get-together.

Q Is that it?

A A little bit more. Let me point out that such meetings are not unusual, that without any advance notice the Secretary did have luncheon and an informal discussion with the Latin American Foreign Ministers, who attended the General Assembly last year.

Q Last year?

A Year.

Q Joe, you began--is that all?

Q You began the statement by saying that when the Secretary talked to the Ambassadors yesterday, he mentioned that the suggestion had been made.

A Yes.

Q Who made this suggestion?

A I don't know who made this suggestion.

It's my impression, Stu, that this has been talked about off and on.

Q Did he suggest a date or a time after which

A No. No, just some time when they are all together at the UN in New York.

Q Was there a consensus in the meeting?

A No. No. No.

Q That it would be a good thing?

A No, what he did was, ask your Foreign Ministers if they would be willing. Presumably, answers will come back.

Q Well, Mr. Rusk intends to be there the first week of the Assembly, does he not?

A I think that is correct, John.

Q Have you any answers yet, Joe?

A Not that I am aware of. It could not have happened before last night.

Q It says here that so many of them are

coming to New York. According to some computations, only five are coming to New York.

A Well, I am sorry, I just don't know which ones are coming. I don't have a list.

Q Joe, this is the first announcement that I have heard on the record that Mr. Rusk is going to the opening of the General Assembly Meeting. Can this be taken as such?

A No, let me back-track, John. I just don't have absolute, firm information on when the Secretary is going. He does plan to go to New York, but please let me not announce that he is going to the opening. I don't know that that is correct. I just do not know what date he will go there.

Q Would this meeting with the Latin American Foreign Ministers be in New York, or Washington?

A I would think New York.

Q When the Secretary specified that this meeting would take no action, does that mean that the United States is opposed to any collective action on Cuba at this time?

A No. No, I wouldn't read that into it at all. This is a get-together of good friends to talk generally about problems of mutual interest.

Q But the fact that there is no agenda and no intention to make any decision or take any action will not prevent them from making a collective statement about their meeting, would it?

A Indeed not.

Q Thank you, Mr. Reap.

[The meeting was concluded
at 12:55 p.m.]

[ECRichard]

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE RECORD